

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-03 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-08 CEA-02

AGR-20 IGA-02 TAR-02 DRC-01 /200 W

----- 116081

R 231646Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4147

INFO AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PASS DEPT OF LABOR (MR SEGALL) AND AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, UK

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CAESAR CHAVEZ

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING HIS VISIT TO LONDON LAST WEEK (LONDON 11945), CAESAR CHAVEZ, HEAD OF THE AFL-CIO'S UNITED FARM WORKERS' OF AMERICA, COMPLAINED BITTERLY THAT THE "GOVERNMENT THROUGH ITS EMBASSY WAS PUSHING GRAPES IN THE UK ON BEHALF OF THE GRAPE GROWERS OF THE US," DESPITE THE EXISTENCE OF A CONSUMER BOYCOTT IN THE US. CHAVEZ' PROGRAM INCLUDED VISITS TO THE TUC, TO THE TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION (TGWU) AND TO THE COVENT GARDEN PRODUCE MARKET IN LONDON. HE WAS RECEIVED WARMLY BY THE UNIONS AND BY THE PRESS, BUT IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THE STRONG MORAL SUPPORT HE OBTAINED WILL BE FOLLOWED UP

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BY TRADE UNION ACTION IN SUPPORT OF THE UFW GRAPE BOYCOTT. END SUMMARY.

2. CHAVEZ, IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE, CHARGED THAT BY "PUSHING GRAPES" THE US GOVERNMENT WAS NOT BEING NEUTRAL IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE FARMWORKERS FOR RECOGNITION BY THE GRAPE GROWERS. CHAVEZ SAID HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE US GOVERNMENT DID NOT LISTEN TO HIS POSITION BEFORE IT HELPED IN THE SALES OF GRAPES. THE LABOR ATTACHE NOTED THAT HE HAD INITIATED THE DISCUSSION WITH CHAVEZ, AND DESPITE THE FACT THAT OTHER UFW REPRESENTATIVES HAD PASSED THROUGH LONDON, INCLUDING HIS BROTHER, RICHARD CHAVEZ IN MID-JANUARY (LONDON 658), NONE HAD CALLED ON THE EMBASSY TO DISCUSS THE UFW POSITION. CHAVEZ ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH US OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PENTAGON, BUT HAD BEEN TOLD "ONLY LIES."

3. CHAVEZ WAS WARMLY RECEIVED BY THE PRESS AND BY THE UNIONS. HE HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE (PRESS REPORTS BEING POUCHED), SAW TUC OFFICIALS, JACK JONES AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE TGWU, AND MET WITH THE PRODUCE HANDLERS AT COVENT GARDEN (MEMBERS OF THE TGWU). CHAVEZ DETAILED THE EFFORTS OF HIS UNION TO WIN RECOGNITION AND DECLARED THAT THE UFW'S CONSUMER BOYCOTT OF CALIFORNIA GRAPES AND LETTUCE WAS FORCING THE GROWERS TO "DUMP" THEIR PRODUCE IN EUROPE THIS WINTER AND NEXT SPRING. THE RESPONSE WAS INDEED FRIENDLY, BUT KEITH HARPER NOTED (GUARDIAN, SEPT 18, 1974) THAT "MR CHAVEZ HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE OFFERS OF MORAL SUPPORT, BUT MAY CONTINUE HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS WONDERING HOW IT WILL BE APPLIED PRACTICALLY."

4. COMMENT: TIM O'LEARY, A TGWU NATIONAL OFFICER, IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE EMB LABATT UNDERSCORED THE "MORAL SUPPORT" FOR THE UNION, BUT WAS FAR LESS SANGUINE ABOUT DIRECT MEASURES WHICH THE UNION MIGHT TAKE IN SUPPORT OF THE UFW BOYCOTT. A CONSUMERS BOYCOTT WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE HERE, AND UNDOUBTEDLY CHAVEZ SEEKS MORE DIRECT INHIBITION OF GRAPES, I.E., REFUSAL BY DOCKERS OR PORTERS TO HANDLE THEM. AS O'LEARY HAS NOTED TO US, THE PLIGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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OF THE LONDON DOCKS MAKE A DOCKERS' BOYCOTT UNLIKELY AND THE COVENT GARDEN PORTERS NOW APPEAR RELUCTANT TO REFUSE HANDLING UNLESS THE DOCKERS ALSO REFRAIN FROM DOING SO. (IT SHOULD BE ADDED THAT LEGAL IMPEDIMENTS TO A SECONDARY BOYCOTT STILL REMAIN IN CURRENT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAW.)
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 23 SEP 1974
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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